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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 000153

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/24/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: NORTH KIVU: MOUNTING TUTSI-HUTU TENSIONS CHALLENGE
SERUFULI

REF: A. KINSHASA 101

[B](#). 05 KINSHASA 2065

[C](#). 05 KINSHASA 2001

Classified By: PolCouns MSanderson, reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Last week's military events in North Kivu (ref a) reflect deeper tensions currently working to destroy the increasingly fragile balance of Tutsi and Hutu interests fostered over three years ago by Governor Eugene Serufuli. The premises (and implied promises) of the loose political agglomeration between Tutsis and Hutus in North Kivu (cooperation would lead to increased economic prosperity, political influence and security for both groups) have not come fully to pass. Indeed, for more than a year, the Tutsis in North Kivu have complained that Serufuli (himself a child of mixed Hutu-Tutsi parentage) has failed, intentionally or not, to advance their particular issues while deliberately working to strengthen the position of the Hutu communities in the province. Serufuli himself admits that mounting pressure from increasingly polarized Hutus and Tutsis is becoming hard for even he to balance, and expressed concern that the Tutsi-Hutu group could founder before elections. End Summary.

North Kivu Tutsis Unhappy

[1](#)2. (C) During a December 17-19 visit to Goma to observe the constitutional referendum (ref b), PolCouns met with a group of Tutsi businessmen with interests in the telecommunications, transportation and agricultural sectors. While raising the same economic issues which have been ongoing points of grievance -- the unwillingness of Kinshasa to license a Goma-based telecommunications company to operate nationally, for instance, and likewise the inability of the Goma-based airline to get permission to operate in western Congo -- the businessmen this time forcefully raised new political and security questions. A ruling by the Supreme Court, for instance, that assassinating the president of a country is a "common law" crime rather than a political crime, which effectively excluded a (largely Tutsi) group of individuals accused in the assassination of former President Laurent Kabila from benefiting from the (now signed) law on amnesty (ref c).

[1](#)3. (C) In a very emotional diatribe these well-educated businessmen argued forcefully that this decision, and the unwillingness of President Kabila's PPRD hard-liners to permit "true national amnesty," would force Tutsis to reexamine their standing in the DRC and, indeed, could so inflame emotions that violence could result, thereby derailing the electoral process. They scornfully dismissed Vice President (and RCD party President) Azarias Ruberwa's efforts to ensure the inclusion of the alleged assassins as "feeble," and the most senior member of the group said simply that Ruberwa is a discredited figure. (Comment: Ruberwa is a South Kivu Munyamulenge. The North and South Kivu Tutsis have not traditionally had many links with each other and indeed North Kivu Tutsis frequently referred to the Banyamulenge as equivalent to half-breeds. Nonetheless, in the minds of the average Congolese, Ruberwa is the senior Tutsi politician in the Congo and represents Tutsi interests, an attitude which the North Kivu Tutsis have never fully or enthusiastically shared. End Comment.)

4.(C) Likewise, they questioned the real access of Tutsis to political power, noting that apart from Ruberwa there are no Tutsis in senior governmental positions (although other non-Tutsi RCD officials do hold significant posts and Moise Nyaragabu, another Munyamulenge, is the leader of the RCD faction in the National Assembly and the party spokesman). Serufuli, despite his mixed heritage, was dismissed as a Hutu. All three argued that their experience with the Tutsi-Hutu group had been as unsatisfactory politically as economically, saying that concerns they had expressed to Serufuli over the last two years (particularly regarding a request to have a Tutsi appointed Mayor of Goma when the former Hutu Mayor was forced out by Serufuli) had been ignored. (Note: The new Mayor of Goma is a Hutu sympathetic to Serufuli's interests, unlike his predecessor. End Note.)

[1](#)5. (C) Finally, they said they felt increasingly insecure due to the "marginalization" of Tutsi military. When asked what

they meant, they pointed to the military integration process which, they argued, was designed to disperse the former ANC (largely Tutsi) elements and transfer them out of the province, thereby leaving the minority Tutsi population

completely undefended.

Serufuli Concerned

16. (C) PolCouns spoke January 23 to Serufuli about the military incidents in the province and tensions within the Tutsi-Hutu group, and between the two tribes. Serufuli said that the attack on Rutshuru (his largest political base, populated mostly by Hutus) was carried out by disgruntled FARDC troops (and former militia elements) led by Colonel Smith (a Tutsi, and formerly the commander of Serufuli's militia). Serufuli considers the attacks to be a "warning shot," and noted that Smith has consistently refused orders to fully integrate with the FARDC. Serufuli said that he is being pressured by Hutu extremists to take swift punitive action against the Tutsis responsible for the attack, while simultaneously Tutsi extremists are alleging that he somehow engineered the attack to discredit and further marginalize them. An uncharacteristically worried Serufuli admitted that it is becoming difficult even for him to balance the increasing strains, noting that there is no one else to whom he can turn for assistance in doing so (an implicit acknowledgment that Ruberwa's influence is limited, ironically in part because Serufuli has deliberately undercut Ruberwa throughout the transition). Serufuli mentioned efforts by Goma-based Tutsi politician Bizima Karaha (who fell out last year with the RCD although he was never officially expelled) to play upon the discontented Tutsis with the objective, according to Serufuli, of possibly forming a new party. (Comment: The rumor mill further links Katebe Katoto with this alleged effort. According to this version, Katebe will help finance the party and will be its presidential candidate in upcoming elections, with Bizima in some sort of supporting role. End Comment.)

Comment

17. (C) Although the military situation appears to be calming down, the political situation in North Kivu (not unexpectedly) is heating up. Tutsi dissatisfaction -- and paranoia -- definitely is the highest PolCouns has seen in the province for some time. Whether this has developed naturally or been helped along by others, such as Bizima, is unclear and almost irrelevant. The reality is that Serufuli's self-proclaimed "rwandaphone alliance" is clearly in trouble, which means that Serufuli is in difficulty. The Tutsi-Hutu dtente is the a key element of Serufuli's future political aspirations, and also his biggest deliverable in terms of the upcoming elections. Serufuli's ability to deliver a block vote is likely one element which has attracted President Kabila's interest. Kabila, who would like a definitive victory in both Kivus, has been personally courting Serufuli. Kabila's support would certainly help Serufuli's current political aspirations, which at the moment seem to be to continue as governor of the province after elections. If the Tutsi-Hutu group further falls apart Serufuli might be forced to reevaluate where his most viable future options lie, which in turn could change the calculations which have underpinned his gradual shift away from Kigali and toward Kinshasa. Although a solely Tutsi party would certainly not do well, either nationally or provincially, its formation at this time could potentially have serious electoral and security consequences not only in North Kivu but nationally as well.

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